

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5996

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 390

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SA, LY

SUBJECT: PRINCE FAHD'S COMMENTS ON HIS TRIP TO LIBYA

REF JIDDA 5745

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING VISIT TO LIBYA JANUARY 16-19, PRINCE FAHD TOLD AMBASSADOR HE HAD TRIED TO IMPROVE LIBYAN LEADERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SAG'S POLICIES; PRINCE WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SUCCESS OF HIS EFFORTS, BUT HAD BEEN STRUCK THROUGHOUT HIS TALKS BY NARROW-MINDEDNESS OF QADHAFI AND JALUD, AND THEIR FIXATION WITH NATIONALIST DOCTRINE. FAHD REPORTEDLY TOOK LIBYAN LEADERS TO TASK FOR "THEIR WELL-KNOWN INSTIGATION" OF ROME AIRPORT KILLINGS, AND ARGUED THAT TERRORISM IN A THIRD COUNTRY AGAINST ANY TARGET -- EVEN AN ISRAELI AIRLINER OR EMBASSY -- WAS INADMISSIBLE AND COUNTER PRODUCTIVE. FAHD ALSO REPROACHED LARG FOR ITS SUPPORT OF DHOFAR LIBERATION FRONT. ON THIS POINT, LIBYANS WERE EVASIVE. PRINCE FAHD -- VERY MUCH THE TRADITIONAL ARAB GENTLEMEN -- MUST HAVE STRUCK

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SOME RCC MEMBERS AS INCARNATION OF A CONSERVATIVE,

FEUDAL REGIME. FOR ALL PRINCE'S CHARM, THEREFORE, WE WONDER HOW EFFECTIVE HE WOULD BE IN MODIFYING LARG PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA. END SUMMARY

1. DRUING AMBASSADOR AKINS' MEETING WITH PRINCE FAHD, JANUARY 22, THE PRINCE COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS ON HIS RECENT TRIP TO LIBYA (JANUARY 16-19):

A. SAUDI-LIBYAN RELATIONS: DURING TALKS ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 17 WITH PRIME MINISTER JALUD, LATTER CRITICIZED SAUDI ARABIA FOR PRESSURING SYRIA AND EGYPT ON BEHALF OF POLICIES HARMFUL TO ARABS AND WHICH DICTATED BY USG. PRINCE REPLIED THAT IT NO SECRET SAUDI ARABIA WAS FRIENDLY TO US, BUT THAT SAUDI ARABIA'S POLICY IN OTHER RESPECTS CLEAR ALSO. SAG SUPPORTED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242, AND BROTHERLY RELATIONS WITH ALL ARAB STATES. FAHD WENT OVER SIMILAR GROUND ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 18 DURING MEETING WITH RCC CHAIRMAN QADHAFI AND SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS OF RCC. PRINCE URGED THAT IT IN INTERESTS OF ALL ARABS THAT THEY ADHERE TO POLICIES OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND NON-INTERVENTION IN ONE ANOTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. QADHAFI APPARENTLY SHOWED SOME SENSITIVITY TO ARTICLES IN LEBANESE CONSERVATIVE DAILY AL-HAYAT, WHICH ALLEGED QADHAFI WAS INSANE; PRINCE NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER LEBANESE DAILIES WERE RELENTLESS IN THEIR ATTACKS ON SAUDI ARABIA, WND URGED THAT LARG ADOPT A POLICY OF FOREBEARANCE TO MEDIA SERVICES AS WELL.

B. TERRORISM: PGINCE SAID HE TOLD JALUD THAT IT WIDELY KNOWN GOL BEHIND KILLINGS AT ROME AIRPORT WHICH WERE AN UGLY CRIME AND HARMFUL TO ARAB CAUSE EVERYWHERE. PRINCE STATES HE ALSO TOLD JALUD THAT TERRORISM IN THIRD COUNTRIES WAS INADMISSIBLE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICS; THIS WAS TRUE EVEN IF INCIDENT SHOULD INVOLVE AN ISRAELI PLANE, AN ISRAELI INSTALLATION, OR AN ISRAELI EMBASSY ON FOREIGN SOIL. ARABS WHO WISHED TO FIGHT ISRAEL SHOULD GO THERE. MEANWHILE, SAG UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW ARAB CAUSE PROMOTED BY WHAT HAPPENED AT SAUDI

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EMBASSY IN KHARTOUM, BY SEIZURE OF SAUDI EMBASSY IN PARIS, AND BY ROME MASSACRE. SAG'S PATIENCE ON SUCH MATTERS WAS LIMITED. JALUD DID NOT REPLY OR COMMENT ON WHAT PRINCE HAD SAID, NOR DID CHAIRMAN QADHAFI WHEN MATTER RAISED WITH HIM FOLLOWING DAY.

C. LIBYAN SUPPORT OF DHOFAR'S LIBERATION FRONT:
FAHD REPROACHED BOTH JALUD AND QADHAFI FOR THEIR SUPPORT

OF DHOFAR LIBERATION FRONT (DLF). SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN TRIPOLI, HE HAD COME INTO POSSESSION OF A FLYER PUT OUT BY THE DLF THANKING THE BROTHERLY LIBYAN PEOPLES AND RCC FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY, SUPPORT, AND ENCOURAGEMENT. HOW COULD A MUSLIM GOVERNMENT SUCH AS LIBYA'S SUPPORT A LEFTIST ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE DLF -- ESPECIALLY SINCE THE DLF OBTAINED MUCH ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN? JALUD IS SAID TO HAVE REPLIED UNEASILY THAT ALTHOUGH DLF HAD A PRESENCE IN LIBYA, IT COULD NOT YET BE CONSIDERED A GOING ORGANIZATION. QADHAFI'S REPLY WAS THAT BY ITS ASSISTANCE, THE LARG HOPED TO WIN THE DLF AWAY FROM ITS LEFTIST BACKERS. FAHD SAID LARG WOULD DO BETTER IF IT APPLIED PRESSURE ON THE DLF TO COOPERATE WITH ITS RECENT GUEST, SULTAN QABUS OF OMAN.

D. OTHER STATES: FAHD DID NOT DISCUSS AT LENGTH WITH RCC LIBYA'S RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA AND EGYPT. IT WAS CLEAR TO HIM, THOUGH, RCC CRITICAL OF AND HOSTILE TO EGYPT. TUNISIAN UNION APPEARED TO HIM IMPULSIVE STEP THAT WELL MIGHT FAIL.

E. FAHD'S CONCLUSIONS: FAHD HOPED THAT AS A RESULT OF HIS VISIT THE LARG'S LEADERSHIP WOULD SHOW MORE UNDERSTANDING AND FOREBEARANCE OF THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT AND REFRAIN FROM TROUBLE MAKING IN THE PENINSULA. HE WAS ONLY CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF HIS VISIT BECAUSE OF HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE CHARACTER OF LIBYA'S LEADERS. IN TALKING TO JALUD AND QADHAFI, FAHD DID NOT FEEL THAT HE WAS TALKING TO PERSONS BUT RATHER TO WIND-UP, MECHANICAL TOYS. THE RCC LEADERS SEEMED INCAPABLE OF DISCUSSING

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ISSUES IN A BROAD AND OBJECTIVE MANNER. THEY ALWAYS CAME BACK OBSESSIVELY TO CERTAIN POINTS WHICH THEY PROPOUNDED IN A NARROW DOCTRINAIRE WAY. FAHD WAS ON WHOLE PESSIMISTIC LARG MIGHT SOON MODIFY ITS SPOILER'S ROLE IN ARAB POLITICS. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT JUST BE POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT IF SYRIANS WERE TO JOIN EGYPT IN MOVES TOWARDS PEACE, THIS MIGHT INCREASE LARG'S SENSE OF ISOLATION TO THE POINT WHERE MODIFICATION OF LARG'S POLICIES COULD OCCUR.

2. COMMENT: IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN ODD SERIES OF MEETINGS: PRINCE FAHD -- THE AMIABLE, TACTFUL, AND EXPANSIVE ARAB GENTLEMAN -- DEBATING BILATERAL AND ARAB RELATIONS WITH THE RCC'S PEA-GREEN REVOLUTIONARIES. FOR ALL HIS CHARM, WE IMAGINE FAHD WOULD COME THROUGH

TO THEM AS AN ARCHETYPAL REPRESENTATIVE OF A CONSERVATIVE
ARAB DYNASTY.
AKINS

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